

Jogger's slaying tied to 'lust'

Defense cites Ackroyd's 'fear'

By Sam Bennett
Bulletin Staff Writer
and The Associated Press

MADRAS — The trial of a man charged with the 1978 killing of a jogger at Camp Sherman began Wednesday with prosecutors saying John Arthur Ackroyd killed because of "sexual violence, sexual power and sexual lust."

Jefferson County District Attorney Bill Hanlon said in his opening statement that the investigation of the death of Kaye Jean Turner of Eugene spanned nearly 15 years.

In the six- to eight-week trial, Hanlon said he would present a case similar to a jigsaw puzzle, in which the combined pieces would shed "illumination to the picture."

"We will prove that the defendant was present and knew where and how Kaye Turner was murdered and admitted to killing Kaye Turner," Hanlon said. "This is non-fiction. This is a real case."

The trial continued today, as Jefferson County Circuit Court Judge Gary Thompson and jurors traveled to the Camp Sherman area where Turner was allegedly abducted and killed.

Ackroyd, 43, and co-defendant Roger Dale Beck are each accused of two counts of aggravated murder, and will be tried separately. The two were indicted in the summer of 1992, after investigators had gathered enough evidence to arrest them.

Ackroyd walked into the courtroom wearing a light blue shirt, cowboy boots, jeans and a studded

black belt with the name "John" in silver letters.

Hanlon said Ackroyd incriminated himself in varying accounts of his connection to the case.

But defense attorney Duane McCabe countered that Ackroyd is mentally slow and easily confused, which explains his contradictory statements to detectives.

McCabe's opening statement lasted just 10 minutes. He raised Ackroyd's special education background.

"It's not the kind of thing that doesn't allow him to get along in the world," McCabe said. But he said his client is "a little bit slow sometimes" and becomes confused easily, especially when nervous.

Turner was a 35-year-old staff resources manager for the Lane County Office of Community Health and Social Services when she disappeared on Christmas Eve 1978 while jogging near the Metolius River.

Her body was found on Aug. 12, 1979, when Ackroyd led police to an area where he said he'd found bone fragments and what turned out to be her jogging shorts.

Police treated Ackroyd and Beck as suspects since early in the investigation but did not charge them until 15 months ago.

Ackroyd first acknowledged seeing Turner jogging the morning of her disappearance, Hanlon said. The prosecutor said Ackroyd also commented later "he wished he had not been the one to find the clothing, because he'd been the last one to see her alive."



John Ackroyd was escorted to court Wednesday

But McCabe vowed he would show that Ackroyd was pinned with the crime due in part to the fact that investigators were desperate for a suspect.

"From embarrassment and frustration, authorities decided, 'We're going to put it all on John Ackroyd's shoulders' — the very thing John Ackroyd was fearful of," McCabe said.

McCabe said he would not refute there were inconsistencies in Ackroyd's statements to authorities in the months after Turner's disappearance. But, instead of hiding his participation in the murder,

Ackroyd changed his story because he was fearful he would be blamed, McCabe argued.

Hanlon portrayed Turner as a "tall, blond, attractive runner" whose tragic death could not be blamed on anyone other than Ackroyd and Beck. Although Turner had reportedly had two affairs, Hanlon said neither the men nor Turner's husband, Noel Turner, was suspected in her disappearance.

Beck, whose trial has not been scheduled, is among scores of potential witnesses. The Ackroyd trial will resume next week.

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